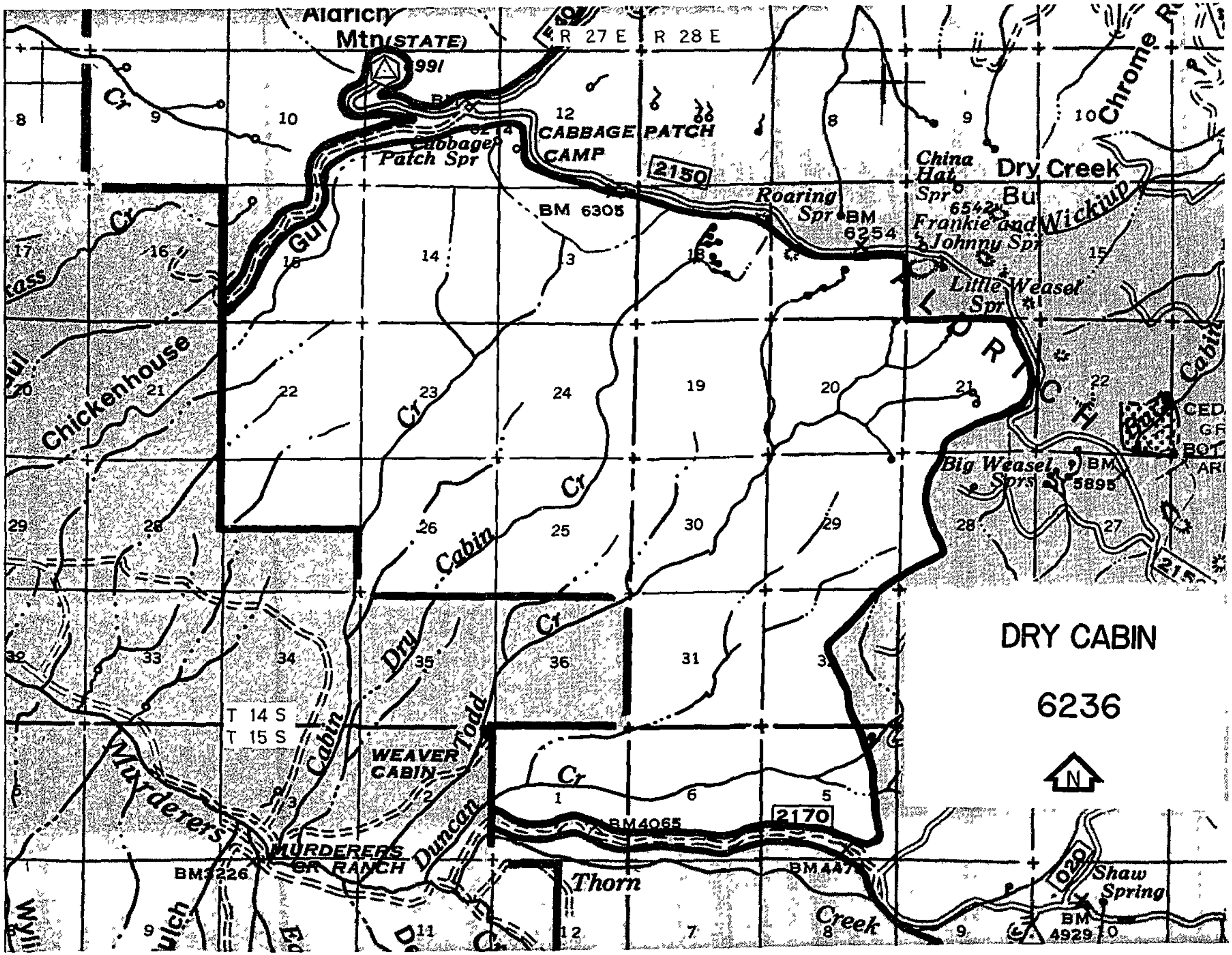
DRY CABIN
6236
N
Aldrich Mtn (STATE)
R 27 E
R 28 E
CABBAGE PATCH CAMP
Cabbage Patch Spr
2150
BM 6305
Roaring Spr
BM 6254
China Hat Spr
Dry Creek Bu
Frankie and Johnny Spr
Wickiup
Little Weasel Spr
Chrome
Chickenhouse
Cabin Cr
Dry Cabin Cr
Big Weasel Sprs
BM 5895
T 14 S
T 15 S
WEAVER CABIN
Todd
Duncan
Murderers
MURDERERS CR RANCH
BM 4065
2170
Thorn Creek
Shaw Spring
BM 4929
020

G. DRY CABIN - 12,221 Acres
(RARE II No. 6236)

1. Description

a. History

This area was inventoried during the RARE process and during the RARE II process Under the South Fork Planning Unit Environmental Impact Statement and the Environmental Impact Statement for RARE II, this area has been managed for nonwilderness uses

b. Location and Access

Dry Cabin area is located on the northwestern edge of the Malheur National Forest, the south side of the Aldrich Mountain Range, about 10 miles southeast of Dayville, Oregon, in Grant County (T 14 S , R 27 E , T 14 S , R. 28 E , T 15 S., R 27 E., T 15 S., R 28 E., of the Willamette Meridian)

Access is via Forest road No 2150 on the north and No 2150039 on the northwest; Forest road Nos 14320, 14024, and 2170042 on the east; and Forest road No 2170 on the south.

c Geography and Topography

The terrain is extremely variable The dominant landform is long, south and west, with steep sideslopes to streams in the bottom Streamcourses include Chickenhouse Gulch and Cabin, Dry Cabin, Todd, North Duncan, and Duncan Creeks, plus many unnamed tributaries Relief is approximately 3,000 feet, from about 6,440 feet below Little Weasel Spring to less than 3,440 feet on Duncan Creek See Figure C-6

d Geology and Soils

The predominant geologic formation is Columbia River Group basalt and andesite. Soils are primarily volcanic ash surface soils with a variety of subsoils on forested sites and loamy and clayey soils on the nonforested areas. The volcanic ash soils are variable in depth to bedrock but are generally about 18 inches, while the loamy and clayey soils range from 8-18 inches in depth The area is covered by Miocene-age basalt flows and Pliocene- to Pleistocene-age welded tuff and sediments (See Chapter III of the Final Environmental Impact Statement for more description of forest soil characteristics.)

e Vegetation

The Dry Cabin area is approximately 77 percent forested Ponderosa pine is the dominant species, associated with Douglas-fir and white fir on the moist sites, and white fir, Douglas-fir, and larch on the upper-elevation sites The Dry Cabin area contains excellent examples of healthy, old-growth ponderosa pine and ponderosa pine, Douglas-fir, and white fir on approximately 850 acres These acres meet the Pacific Northwest Region's definition of old growth.

f. Current Uses

Wildlife is plentiful with high spring, summer, and fall use by many species including wild/free-roaming horses, elk, mule deer, black bear, mountain lion, and possibly bighorn sheep (from the Aldrich herd), as well as many small nongame animals Birdlife is primarily songbirds but includes others such as raptors and game birds Much of the area includes elk winter range (along the south and southwest portions) and is included in the Murderers Creek Coordinated Resource Management Area. Streams contain both native trout and steelhead

Recreation use is light and consists primarily of big-game hunting. There are minor amounts of hiking, backpacking, sightseeing, and game bird hunting Most activity occurs on the north end of the unit along the Aldrich Mountains crest (See Table C-2)

The unit contains portions of two grazing allotments and contributes an average of 550 Animal Unit Months annually Availability of water and the terrain generally concentrate livestock use in stream bottoms.

Attractions include the opportunity to be in wild and rugged country with no intrusions from others The area offers solitude, peace, and quiet. The area will also continue to be used by big-game hunters.

2. Wilderness Capability

a Manageability and Boundaries — The present boundary follows natural physical characteristics, roads, or the Forest boundary.

b. Natural Integrity — Natural integrity is extremely high. With the exception of minor, Primitive jeep roads, the area is essentially untouched by human activities. The major human impacts have been livestock grazing and fire management.

c. Naturalness — The natural appearance within the area is virtually intact. Human activities are not apparent to the average visitor. The area adjacent to the eastern boundary of the roadless area is in a timber sale; however, this does not interfere with the appearance of the unit itself because of the size of the unit and lay of the land. Although there are several roads forming the boundaries of the roadless area, they receive little use Primary human impacts on the area consist of livestock use and hunter roads on two ridgetops

d Opportunity for Solitude — The opportunity for solitude is excellent. The exceptions may be during hunting season when the area receives more use and some highway noise from U.S. 26, approximately 5 miles away. Because the area is large and diverse, intervention by other persons is remote.

e. Primitive Recreation and Challenge — The opportunity for hiking, hunting, backpacking, and riding horses is excellent; most of the area is physically demanding because of the steepness and ruggedness of the terrain. There are no maintained recreation facilities.

f. Special Features — There is great scenic variety, ranging from forested benches and broad ridgetops to deep canyons with open slopes and forested bottom lands. The majority of forest stands are open with some very large trees, and many contain large areas with a park-like setting.

There are no Threatened, Endangered, or Sensitive plant or animal species within this area. There are no identified cultural resource sites within the unit; however, the probability of both historic and prehistoric properties is high. An identified prehistoric gathering area is adjacent to the northeast boundary, and several others are just outside the unit.

3. Availability for Wilderness

a. Resource Potentials — The potential for increased livestock use is low. Terrain and lack of adequate forage (apart from the stream bottoms) are the primary limiting factors.

The area currently provides a roaded natural recreation experience, a semiprimitive nonmotorized recreation experience, and a semiprimitive motorized experience. (See Table C-3.) The area is capable of providing 15,721 Recreation Visitor Days annually (See Table C-4.)

There are 5,888 acres of forested land which is tentatively suitable for timber management activities. These tree stands are primarily mixed conifer. Many have a ponderosa pine overstory with mixed conifer species growing in the understories The average age of the overstories is 140 years, the understories acreage 75 years There is a standing volume of 52.2 million board feet (9.17 million cubic feet) With the use of intensive timber management techniques, 283 thousand cubic feet (1,619 thousand board feet) would be contributed to the annual allowable sale quantity in the first decade The long-term sustained yield capacity from this area would be 336 thousand cubic feet per year.

The area has no known locatable mineral potential and contains no mining claims. The U.S. Geological Survey considers the area to be prospectively valuable for oil and gas but not for geothermal resources. There are current oil and gas leases on 11 sections and some testing in conjunction with these leases has occurred.

b Management Considerations

The Aldrich Mountain Range is historically one of the hardest hit by lightning on the Bear Valley Ranger District. The hazard is high to very high. The south and west slopes are dry with flashy fuels, while the timbered bottom lands have dense concentrations of heavy fuels. Lack of access requires that most fires in the unit be attacked by helicopter or smokejumper crews

Insect damage from the western spruce budworm is not widespread on the south face of the Aldrich Mountain Range, however, there is a population present in the mixed conifer stands. Tree mortality across the Forest is considered insignificant and affected timber appears to be recovering The white fir component in the unit, as with most of the general area, has a high cull factor from root rots in greater than 12 inch diameter classes

There are no present or planned impacts on the water resource in terms of impoundments, power withdrawals, etc., nor are there any measuring sites. There is little potential to increase streamflow and little demand for supply other than for livestock use. These streams make significant contributions to the local fisheries.

There are no non-Federal lands within the roadless area. Private and Bureau of Land Management lands adjoin the roadless area boundary on the south

4. Wilderness Evaluation

The Strawberry Mountain Wilderness is 24 miles east, Monument Rock Wilderness is 55 miles east, North Fork John Day River Wilderness is 50 miles northeast, and Black Canyon Wilderness is 8 miles west of the Dry Cabin roadless area The ecosystems present in Dry Cabin are represented in those wildernesses

The nearest major metropolitan areas are Portland, Oregon (260 miles northwest), and Boise, Idaho (200 miles east).

In the 1979 RARE II study, this area received 2,732 comments favoring wilderness, 25 favoring further planning, and 3,388 favoring nonwilderness management. In recent Forest planning public involvement activities, the area was among those receiving a low level of interest. The comments received were almost equally divided between wilderness advocacy and nonwilderness advocacy, with a respective ratio of 1.1.4

The primary reasons supporting wilderness were wild horse protection and inclusion in a proposed wilderness complex with Shaketable and Aldrich. The primary reason opposing wilderness was low opportunity for Primitive recreation in a natural setting There was support for special management considerations for fish and wildlife in this area.

5. Environmental Consequences

Table C-10 displays the management area assignment by alternative.

a Vegetation/Trees

Significant changes in tree size, density, and composition are expected in Alternatives A, B-Modified, F, I, and NC as the overstory is removed and stocking level control is achieved As this occurs, stand characteristics will change to a managed forest appearance Old growth will be retained on 1,200 acres for Alternatives A, B-Modified, F, and I. Alternative NC would retain approximately 960 acres of old growth Under the above alternatives, the predominant mixed conifer and ponderosa pine overstories would be treated silviculturally by shelterwoods and clearcuts Risk of loss to insects and/or diseases would be reduced The actual acres affected by timber management activities would vary between these alternatives, in Alternative F approximately 2,700 acres would be affected in the first decade

Under Alternative I, timber harvests would be on a non-scheduled basis and would be used only to meet fish and/or wildlife habitat objectives. When timber harvesting is warranted, silvicultural prescriptions will be designed to meet these objectives utilizing both even-aged and uneven-aged management techniques The environmental changes, although similar to those in Alternatives A, B-Modified, F, and NC, as expressed in the above paragraph, would not occur as rapidly as in these other alternatives.

In Alternative C-Modified the tree stands would progress through the natural successional cycle All naturally occurring old growth would be retained in these alternatives (this applies to the Wildlife Emphasis portion only).

b. Vegetation/Grass and Shrubs

In Alternatives A, B-Modified, F, I, and NC forage for wildlife and livestock is expected to increase in forested areas where harvests occur As tree cover is reduced, native forage plants such as elk sedge, pinegrass, wheatgrass, and fescue will increase naturally Where prescribed, seeding of introduced forage species will provide higher quality forage and change the plant composition present In the long term, a gradual decrease in forage plants is expected as the tree cover gradually increases again and shades the understory

In Alternative C-Modified forage production is expected to remain at present levels and may decrease as Douglas-fir and white fir further encroach under the ponderosa pine-dominated south and westerly slopes.

c Wilderness

Alternative C-Modified would preclude nonconforming activities such as timber harvest but permit motorized vehicle use Future wilderness consideration would remain a possibility under Alternative C-Modified

In Alternatives A, B-Modified, F, I, and NC, visitors would see timber harvest activities, new road construction, and increased motorized vehicle use. By the end of the first decade, future wilderness consideration would be foregone as the activities change the character of the area

d. Recreation

In Alternatives A, B-Modified, F, NC, and in the NE portion under I, the recreation experience would be roaded modified with expectations of increased vehicle use. Greater hunter success may occur in the short term as hiding cover is reduced by harvest activities and easier road access is provided In the long term, opportunity for a remote, nonmotorized hunting experience may decrease if more hunting pressure occurs and new access roads are traveled by more hunters.

Alternative C-Modified offers a semiprimitive motorized recreation opportunity which would provide a more natural setting to users than Alternatives A, B-Modified, F, or NC Moreover, road access during periods other than summer months is expected to be limited and used by more specialized vehicles such as four-wheel drives All of the above alternatives would permit other motorized vehicles including snowmobiles and motorbikes.

Alternative I presents a roaded natural recreation opportunity on 7,000 acres within the roadless area

e Scenery

In Alternatives A, B-Modified, F, I, and NC, viewers would see evidence of a managed forest The long-term effects on scenery would include younger, managed tree stands, more access roads, and less naturalness

In Alternative C-Modified most of the present scenery would be retained and no noticeable changes are foreseen barring a major outbreak of insects, diseases, or catastrophic fire

f Wildlife

Alternative C-Modified would retain the largest acreage of old growth and the most wildlife snags In other alternatives, most of the old growth except for 1,200 acres (962 acres in Alternative NC) would be harvested over time. Wildlife snag levels would vary between 20 and 60 percent under Alternatives NC, A, B-Modified, F, and I Management standards would adequately protect key habitat for all wildlife under all alternatives. The areas designated as old growth in each alternative are expected to meet minimum habitat requirements of pileated woodpecker, pine marten, and other wildlife species

About one-half of the area in the south and west portion is considered elk winter range The habitat would be affected in Alternatives A, B-Modified, F, I, and NC by removal of some hiding and thermal cover by harvest activities and a resulting increase in forage

g Water, Riparian, Fisheries

The anadromous fish habitat in the lower reaches of Duncan and Cabin Creeks, the riparian vegetation along six streams, and the water quality of all streams in the area would be least affected by Alternative C-Modified. Management standards will adequately protect the streamside area under all alternatives There would be increased accessibility and use indirectly associated with timber harvest and road construction in Alternatives A, NC, B-Modified, F, and I.

h Cultural Resources — All alternatives are similar in effects on cultural resources. There is no discernible difference between alternatives when considering existing regulations, laws, and management standards. Alternatives A, B-Modified, F, I, and NC present the greatest risk of inadvertent damage to the resource. They also present the greatest opportunity for discovery and interpretation of cultural resources.

i. Soils — Alternatives A, B-Modified, F, I, and NC present the greatest risk of inadvertent damage to the soils as well as acceptable amounts of compaction as a result of harvest activities All of the alternatives adequately protect the resource through application of management standards.

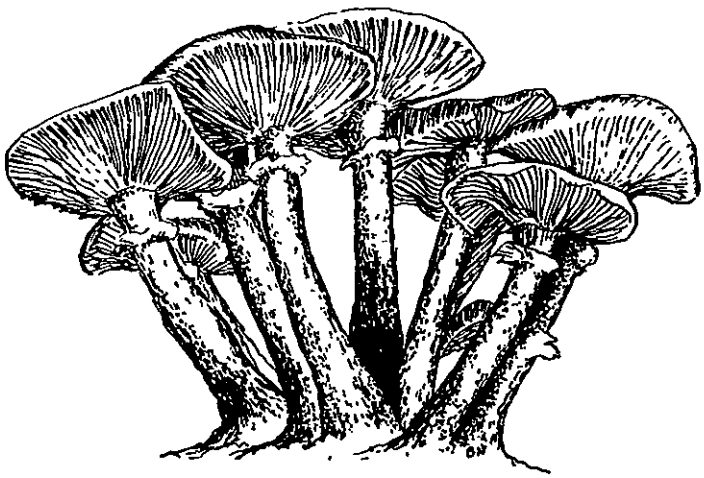

TABLE C-10
DRY CABIN MANAGEMENT BY ALTERNATIVE
(Acres)

Management Area	Alternatives					
	NC[1/]	A	B-Mod	C-Mod	F	I-Preferred
1. General Forest			5,465		5,491	
2. Rangeland			813		759	
3 Riparian Areas	N/A	730	717		668	
4A. Big-Game Winter Range	N/A		3,247		3,268	
4B. Big-Game Winter Range Enhancement	N/A					
5. Bald Eagle Winter Roost						
6A. Strawberry Mountain Wilderness						
6B. Monument Rock Wilderness						
6C. Pine Creek						
7. *Scenic Area*						
8 Special Interest Area						
9. Research Natural Area						
10. Semi-Primitive Non-Motorized						
11. Semi-Primitive Motorized				12,221		
12. Developed Recreation						
13. Old Growth	N/A	1,200	1,200		1,200	1,200
14 Visual Corridors						
15. Unit Plan Wildlife Emphasis Areas	N/A	9,467				
16. Minimum Level Management		824	779		835	
17. Byram Gulch Municipal Supply Watershed						
18. Long Creek Municipal Supply Watershed						
19. Administrative Sites						
20. Wildlife Emphasis Areas with Scheduled Harvest						11,021
21. Wildlife Emphasis Area Non-Scheduled Harvest						
22. Wild and Scenic River						
TOTAL ACRES	N/A	12,221	12,221	12,221	12,221	12,221

1/The Timber Management Plan, upon which the No Change Alternative is based, was developed in 1979. The plan was not an integrated plan and, consequently, did not address all resource uses and outputs in an integrated manner. As a result, these acreages are not available.